

## Aftermath 2: The Unlikely Hero

by Raven Ebony

Category: Legend of Zelda

Genre: Adventure

Language: English

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2000-05-06 09:00:00

Updated: 2000-05-06 09:00:00

Packaged: 2016-04-27 17:14:27

Rating: K

Chapters: 1

Words: 8,190

Publisher: [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)

Summary: Years after his defeat, Agahnim returns to take Hyrule by force. And this time, not even Link or Zelda can stop him...

## Aftermath 2: The Unlikely Hero

> <meta name="ProgId"> The Alter Ego War

Legend of Zelda: The Unlikely Hero

By: Matthew Handy

### Prelude

It started as a few dark clouds on the horizon. One, then two, they started to gather, but still, no one took notice. Daily life went on unhampered. Not one person saw the storm that was to come.

The clouds watched as the unsuspecting public went on. \_After all\_, it thought, \_the great evil has been banished. Why should they see it coming\_? The storm laughed in spite of itself. Its spires of cumulus wavered and clenched like fists.

It moved on, soon to unleash its wrathful plague upon the landâ€¦

\*\*\*

At the edge of an expansive forest, one young man saw the storm clouds coming, but took no heed. They seemed innocent enough and the man was eager to get home to his wife and child. He hurried through the field, and it was evening before he passed a tall plateau. He and his fire-red stallion rode quickly through the night.

\*\*Chapter 1\*\*

The next morning Link awoke. A yawn spread across his face as he looked to his side and saw that the spot next to him on the bed was empty. Link thought little of this.

The first rays of sunlight were beginning to come through the window. He looked out of the castle tower that he and Zelda shared; the clouds he had seen earlier still remained. They actually seemed bigger than before. At the very least they were darker, and closer.

Hyrule market was quiet still. The gate hadn't opened yet, so the traders couldn't get in.

Link yawned again. It really was a sleepy morning, so peaceful—so perfect. Now the sun poked itself over the horizon. The cock crowed, and the day finally began.

Link got dressed in his green tunic, but again felt compelled to look out the window—but he couldn't tell why—

It was then that he was grabbed from behind. Something leaped on his back. At first he was surprised, but he soon realized how to get control of the situation. He reached behind him, plucked the entity off him, and held it in front of him—

"Daddy! Daddy!" called the girl, " Did I sneak up on you this time?" He looked at her, the cute red-haired girl, and smiled. She was laughing and smiling too. She hugged him. She was small for her age, seeming more like she was ten than a fourteen-year-old. Her size was deceptive though. She was wise beyond her years, and always the first to get involved in big events. Her big, violet eyes were innocent, as he hoped they would always remain. Of course, it was his daughter.

"You sure did, Keria!" said Link as he set her down, "You're getting as quiet as a Gerudo."

Keria responded by jumping up and down in triumph. When she stopped, a surprised look came across her face, "Oh yeah! Mommy said to go down to the library because it's your anniversary. She told me to come get you when you woke up."

"Anniversary?" questioned Link. \_Our wedding anniversary isn't for a few months yet, \_he thought. "I wonder what she means."

"I don't know," said Keria, "but I think she was all nervous about it. She tried her best to hide it though!" after a moment she added, "Can I go out to play?"

"Not yet," said Link, "Not until it gets brighter out."

"Oh— all right.

\*\*\*

Link made his way down to the castle's archive room. Not surprisingly, Zelda was waiting there for him. She didn't notice him at first as he came down the old stone stairway. She seemed to be absorbed in a book that she was reading.

"Hey Zel," he greeted. She didn't hear him, so he repeated, "Zelda?"

She looked up with a start, "Oh, Link, I'm glad you're here."

"Keria said you were upset about something. What's wrong?"

"I am upset," said Zelda. She looked up at him and removed her reading glasses, "I get this way every time this yearâ€|but this year it is worse. I feel like something is coming. Remember Link? It's been sixteen years since Ganon was banished to the Void."

"An anniversaryâ€|" Link blinked as the realization came to him, "I hadn't even thought of it! But what makes this year any different?"

"I don't know," replied Zelda, "I haven't felt this way since the first time I saw Ganondorf."

Link thought for a moment, "Maybe we should post some extra guards around the castle."

"Good idea," said Zelda, "The sooner the better."

Zelda stood, saying that she would get back to her book later. They both went upstairs.

Little did they know that a set of eyes had been on themâ€|

## **\*\*Chapter 2\*\***

Those eyes belonged to Keria. She had heard the whole thing. Her parents had told her little about Ganon. They seemed uncomfortable about it. However, many of their friends had filled her in on the finer details. Her father had saved Hyrule from that black-hearted man and banished him into another dimension. They didn't know what had happened to him, but he hadn't been heard from sinceâ€|or so the official record saidâ€|but she had heard rumors that Ganon had still been able to influence Hyrule from his dark realm. She had been told that her parents had had to enter that void and put a stop to him foreverâ€|but had failed.

Keria waited until her mother and father had left the library chamber. Then she snuck down the stairs and examined the book that her mother had been so greatly disturbed by. It was some sort of history book. She read a passage:

â€|And so the seven sages and the Hero of Time sealed the Evil Incarnation into the Void where he was to remain forever. However he held tightly onto the Triforce of Power and even as he faded from the land of Hyrule, he vowed to vet revenge on the Hero's children.

He has tried vainly for many years to open the Wise Sage's seal, but it is unlikely that he will be able to do so for many centuries.

As for the Triforces of Wisdom and Courage, they remain with the Seventh Sage and the Hero of Timeâ€|

Keria couldn't read any more. It was written like stereo instructions

and had too many big words. But why had that book upset her mother like that? Whoever that 'Hero of Time' guy was had saved everyone. Wasn't that happy news?

She was about to leave when a passage caught her eye:

â€|And to this day, The Hero Link, and Zelda have defended the Kingdom of Hyruleâ€|

She suddenly realized something that had escaped her until nowâ€|She was the one that Ganon had sworn to destroy!

\*\*\*

Keria left the castle to play in the courtyard. She tried not to let her parents know that she knew what she knewâ€|after all, they would protect her if that Ganondorf guy tried to hurt herâ€|wouldn't they?

She gave herself an affirmative "YES" and promptly decided to go on with her normal routine. She played a game of Hide and Seek with one of the Guards until his commander told him to stop goofing off on a day like this. He told her that she should run along.

It was 10:00 and the young Hylian was about to go inside when a cluster of clouds began to move in. "It's gonna rain, rain, rain! Rain, rain go away!" she chanted.

Keria was about to head inside when suddenly a voice called her name. "Who's there?" she questioned. No one answered. Even the guards had disappeared. She took a few steps out and called again.

This time the voice answered, "Come on! Hurry!" said the young sounding, but authoritative female voice, "I have a game we just have to play!"

The royal daughter began walking in the direction that the voice had come from. "Ummmâ€| who are you?" she asked as she walked.

"I'm an old friend of your father's," the voice said. Then it confessed, "Ok, this isn't a game, but please hurry anyway!"

Keria's voice began to beat faster. What if this was that Ganondorf guy in disguise? She could be walking into a trap! Still, something inside her told her to move on. She followed the voice out to the market place where nobody took notice of her. Then she noticed that she was heading right for the Temple of Time. "Daddy told me not to come here."

"He won't mind this time."

"You sure?"

"Yes."

Keria didn't say anything more. She entered the templeâ€|

\*\*\*

"Link?" called Zelda, "It looks like it's going to rain. Where's Keria?"

"I thought she was in the courtyard," he replied.

"She's not, I just checked." That worried her. She hated losing track of Keria, she did have a knack for getting into trouble, but today was more delicate than usual.

"I'll send the guards out to find her," said Link. Then he left.

Lightning was flashing outside now. Zelda could see it through the window. The wind had picked up. Now everything that wasn't nailed down was blowing around. \_Is Keria out in this\_?

The wind was howlingâ€¦thunder and lightning everywhereâ€¦it was enough to frighten her, "Link!" called Zelda, already knowing that he wouldn't hear her.

Then, just as it had began, the world suddenly went silentâ€¦

\*\*\*

"Where are you?" questioned Keria. She was in a large chamber. On the other side of the room was an alter with three notches in it. The alter stood just in front of a large door that had an eye inscribed on it.

"I'm right behind you," replied the voice, "My name is Saira."

Keria turned to see a small green-haired girl. Saira looked to be about ten, but her eyes gave away that she was older. Maybe even older than she was!

"Hi," was all that Keria could get out.

"No doubt this comes as a surprise to you. Do you know what's going on?"

"Is something bad going to happen?"

"It seems that way. I have something for you." She held out her hand and in it sat a tiny fairy.

"I don't need any life hearts," protested the young princess.

"She's not that kind of fairy," replied Saira, "She's a Guardian Fairy. Her magic will protect you from the evil spell that is about to be cast."

The fairy started flying and came up to Keria, "Hi! I'm Navi. Nice to meet you!"

"You can introduce yourselves later," prompted Saira, "Come with me." Saira led them outside.

It was strangely quiet, much too quiet for the market at this hour. Usually a little rain wouldn't even slow down the trading of the

merchants. She saw no movement, and when they reached the marketplace, Keria saw why. She was walking when she came face to face with a stone statue. But this statue looked strangely like one of her friends.

"John?" she questioned. There was no answer of course, and when she looked around, she saw statue after statue-people frozen where they stood. Keria shouted, "What's going on?"

"The darkness did this," replied Saira with a touch of horror in her voice.

"Did this happen to Mommy and Daddy too?"

"No, the darkness took them. It would have taken you too if you hadn't been in the Temple of Time. Right now it is localized to the castle town, but soon it will take over all of Hyrule—and with every soul it takes it will grow stronger."

Keria said nothing, but only stared at the ever-darkening clouds, so Saira continued; "You'll need the Master Sword if you're to have a chance. It now rests in the Lost Woods. Not far from the Forest Temple. You'll need the three spiritual stones to pull it up though. They should be in your parents' chamber"

"Are you telling me that I'm the only one that can stop this?" Keria asked in shock. She turned to ask it again, but found that she was alone with Navi and the once-flesh stone.

\*\*\*

Keria climbed the seemingly endless stairway to reach her parents' chamber. Just as in the market, not one creature stirred in the castle. She made it, and searched the room until she came across an old chest. Gracelessly, she kicked it open and found three gold encrusted gemstones. One was an emerald, the second a ruby, and the third, a sapphire.

"That them?" asked Keria.

"Yeah," replied Navi, "You might want to take your father's item pouch too. I'll bet it has a lot of useful stuff in it."

"Good idea." The child routed around the room until she found it. She sighed as she looked out the window, "Navi, how am I supposed to do this?"

"I don't know," replied the fairy, "You just have to try your best and hop that it's enough."

Keria sighed again, and they headed out.

\*\*\*

Back in the courtyard, the two continued on at a faster pace when Keria suddenly sped up. "It'll take us 'til night to get there!" she called. Then, she promptly tripped. As soon as she hit the ground, it began to shake. "I didn't hit it that hard!" exclaimed Keria.

"Something's coming up!" called Navi, "Get up!"

Even as she did so, the ground split and a spider creature exited from a tunnel.

"It's a Gohma!" called Navi, "It's only vulnerable if you stun it!"

"And just how do I do that?" Keria quickly searched through her pouch until she found a Fairy Bow and some Deku Nuts. She looked up just in time to see the huge spider creature take a swipe at her. Fortunately, she was able to duck just in time.

"Ready!" called Navi, "Waitâ€¦throw the nut now!"

Keria did, and it exploded when it hit the ground. Gohma started blinking and flailing her arms wildly. "Finish it with an arrow!" Called the fairy. She did. Using her bow, Keria fired an arrow right into Gohma's eye. The cycloptic creature didn't even slow down though. In its blind rage, it knocked Keria to the ground. She fired arrow after arrow into its hide. Gohma roared in pain, then collapsed lifelessly to the ground.

\*\*\*

After grabbing a Hylian Shield out of Bazaar's store, Keria and her new fairy companion entered Hyrule Field.

"This shield is too big!" complained the girl.

"Trust me, you'll need it," said Navi.

"I still don't feel right about just stealing it."

"Let's look at it this way," replied the little fairy, "He was right there and he didn't tell you not to."

Keria laughed at this and they continued on.

Around noon, Keria looked back for what felt like the millionth time. The dark clouds were slowly expanding, almost as if they were following her. By now, they had made it to Death Mountain and the Gorons had probably become even more stone-faced than usual.

Keria kept walking though. Unerringly, she headed for the Forest.

**\*\*Chapter 3\*\***

It was dark except for a few torches. Link wasn't sure where he was. The air stank of death and decay. The putrid smell was almost enough to make him vomit.

Link looked and saw that he was chained, hands and feet, to a damp and moldy wall. Next to him was Zelda who was also bound. They appeared to be unhurt.

"Zelda," he called. She didn't answer. He called again and this time she lifted her head.

"What happened?" she asked groggily. She seemed even more confused than she was.

"I'm not sure," he replied, "Are you alright?"

"I think so,"

Link examined their surroundings. They were a dungeon of some sort. But Link had seen this dungeon before. There was something strange about the chamber they were in. Then it came to him. The staircase over in the corner—there were other features too! "Hey—we're still in the castle!"

"You're right," agreed Zelda, "But what has happened to it?"

"What indeed?" said a voice. There was a short laugh, and a figure emerged from the shadows. It was the last person he had expected to see, but Link knew he should have guessed it. He looked just as he had. His gray hair and flowing red cape hadn't changed. The man—the monster smirked at the two Hylians.

"Agahnim!" spat Link, "What in Hyrulian Hell are you doing here?"

"Well, well," said the puppet, "I believe I am destroying everything that you hold dear," He laughed again, "My master was pleased with my work last time, so he brought me back."

"Where's Keria?" demanded Zelda.

"Unfortunately, she was able to escape my spell by taking refuge in the Temple of Time. I was hoping to have the pleasure of killing her before your eyes, but that can wait. Not to worry though, I will find her, and when I do—she will die."

\*\*\*

It was night, when the wolves had just begun to howl, before Keria made it to the woods. She was tired and exhausted from her day's trek and wanted nothing more than to curl up and go to sleep.

"I wanna take a break!" called Keria to Navi, "I'm all sleepy-sleepy." She gave a big yawn as if to prove this.

"Ok," replied Navi, "We can rest a while in the Kokiri Village. It should be safe."

They exited the tunnel that led to the tiny forest town and were relieved to find it full of children who were not affected by the evil magic. Keria moved a few yards into the grove. Then, when she was satisfied that she had the attention of as many of the tiny elves as she could, she yelled, "Hey! I gotta talk to Mido!"

"He's out," called one of the Kokiri children. It was a girl and she approached the princess, "I'm Dorayso and I'm in charge while he's gone. What's the matter, Princess Keria?"

"What's the matter?" exclaimed Keria, "What isn't the matter? There's a dark cloud swallowing Hyrule! It took Mommy and Daddy and is turning everyone else into stone!"



Dorayso gave her a skeptical look. The others were starting to gather by now, frightened and fascinated by the story the young princess was telling. Finally Dorayso spoke, "Are you absolutely sure?"

"She is," Navi spoke for her.

"This is not good at all," replied the Kokiri.

"You're telling me," said Keria, "I gotta go get the Master Sword, but I'm really tired now though. Can me and my fairy friend sleep here until morning?"

"Of course," replied the Kokiri girl, " We'll get you a guide to show you where the sword sleeps," she turned to a blond haired Kokiri, "Fado, show the princess to a bed. Make sure she is fed as well."

\*\*\*

"And just why do you think you'll win this time?" said Zelda.

"What, do you think that baby you call a daughter will save you?" Agahnim scoffed, "She's probably hiding in a corner some where," he gave a cruel smile, "And even if she does try something, I have a few new tricks up my sleeve." Agahnim held up his right hand. Zelda saw what the fiend was talking about. The marking of the Triforce appeared on the back of his hand. However, it turned not red, which would indicate the influence of the Triforce of Power, but instead, it became dark black, "This is the Triforce of Darkness."

"There's no such thing!" called Link.

"There is now, pest! My Master created it. Though even he could not create a complete Triforce. So this Triforce needs the a power source—and I found one." Lowering his hand once more, Agahnim's smile broadened, "It's true that Ganon can't leave the Sacred Realm. So what! We will simply extend it over Hyrule. My dark cloud will suck the life force from every unprotected creature in Hyrule. As it spreads, so will Ganon's Dark World. In addition, with every life I take, my Triforce grows stronger—and soon mine will reign supreme!"

"You're insane!" yelled Link.

"Really?" And you are just noticing that now?"

"I won't let you do this!" Link struggled against the shackles, but it was to no avail. Zelda saw that he wouldn't be able to break them. After a moment, Link stopped.

"Are you quite through?" mocked Agahnim. His smiled faded somewhat, "Time to meet another one of your old friends," A shadow formed out of thin air and rose as if an actual person. It took a familiar shape, "You remember Dark Link don't you?" Neither of the tow Hylians responded, "Dark Link! Hunt down that child and kill her!"

"With pleasure," responded the shadow.

\*\*\*

"Come on! Wake up! Hey!" called Navi, "I can't believe the fate of Hyrule rests with such a lazy girl."

Keria stirred and opened her eyes, "Aww! Morning already?" She sat up and after a yawn, dangled her feet over the edge of the bed. "Ok I'm up."

Just then there was a knock at the door, "Will you be ready soon?" called a Kokiri, "I'll be your guide through the Lost Woods."

"Ok," called Keria, "I'll be out soon."

She spent a few minutes getting ready. Then, when she finished, she stepped outside. Looking down from the little tree house, she saw a Kokiri male. He was around her height and had blond hair. For the most part, he wore traditional Kokiri garb, but instead of a green hat, he wore a black bandanna. He was better built than the other Kokiri that she had seen.

"Wow!" she whispered.

Navi landed on her shoulder, "What is it?"

"He's cute."

They were quickly on their way. And soon the forest enveloped them. Furtive shadows moved in the trees, and Keria quickly noticed that the forest sprites that normally would dance through the trees were far less prevalent today. She mentioned it to her guide, who had introduced himself as Chris, and he replied, "Yeah, it's a bad omen—we'd better be careful." And so they were, but nothing so much as a Wolfos bothered them. It was odd, because the Kokiri scouts had reported that monster activity had more than tripled over the night and that Hyrule field was crawling with an assortment of nasty creatures. One would think that it would be even more so in the forest. What would keep them out?

They reached the Sacred Forest Meadow. Sure enough, right in the brightest beam of sunlight was a gleaming sword with an amethyst color handle. It seemed almost as warm and alive as the forest it rested in.

As the two approached it, Keria saw that The Master Sword was imbedded in a large pedestal of marble on which a picture of the Triforce was carved.

Chris looked on in awe, "Dorayso said that if you pull up the sword, the evil won't be able to touch the forest."

Keria approached the blade and she could practically feel it. She reached for it—

"Keria! Keria, can you hear me?" it was her father's voice. It was coming from behind her. She turned but saw nothing. The call continued, "I'm back here. I escaped but can you believe it? I got stuck in this tree."

"Where are you Daddy?"

"I'm back here. Come get me out will you?"

"Ok Daddy. I'll be right there." By now Keria had forgotten the Master Sword. She only wanted to see her father again.

Keria began moving toward the source of the voice. Suddenly Navi started flashing between yellow and red, "Wait! How do you know that it's really him?"

"But he saidâ€¦"

Chris stepped forward, "I'll check it out." He walked to the edge of the clearing and peered around a tree. He looked back, "I don't see anythingâ€¦"

Suddenly a sword slashed out, slicing him across the chest. Keria watched in horror as he fell, and not a moment after he hit the ground, a dark figure stepped out from behind the tree. It looked strangely like her fatherâ€¦but it was a shadow with glowing red eyes, "You've been a very bad girl!" it snarled, "Come here and get a spanking!"

Keria backed up, edging closer to the Master Sword. Navi called, "It's Dark Link! A creature that Ganon created to try to destroy your father!" Keria turned and began to move more quickly.

"Come here you little brat!" called the shadow. It drew its sword and prepared to skewer her.

Keria reached the sword and gave it a quick upward up. It slid easily out in her hands. Light poured from instantly killing the dark shadow. But it didn't stop there. Keria felt a strange tingling in her body. It made her feel dizzy as if everything was getting smaller. Then, a blue light enveloped her completely. Keria closed her eyes as the world around her faded away.

**\*\*Chapter 4\*\***

**\*\* \*\***A few seconds later Keria opened her eyes again, "What happened?" she asked and immediately she noticed that her voice was strangeâ€¦it soundedâ€¦older. She looked at herself and suddenly it came to her, "Navi! I'm all stretched out!"

"No," said Navi, "You grew up."

Keria saw Chris and rushed over to him. She felt for his pulseâ€¦he had one, but it was weak. After sheathing the Master Sword, she picked the now much smaller seeming child up, "We've gotta get him back to the town," she insisted.

"Agreed," said Navi, "Odd, you weren't transferred through timeâ€¦only aged."

"We'll figure it out later," replied Keria. It was odd. Suddenly she felt much older too. It was almost as if something was inside her now that hadn't been before. She wasn't sure exactly what it was, but she liked it.

As they walked, Keria asked, "Now that we've got the Master Sword,

where do we go to get my parents back?"

"I'm not sure," replied the fairy, "but since this all began in Hyrule Castle Town, maybe we should try there first."

Just then, Chris opened his eyes, "Who are you?" he asked bewildered.

"It's me, Keria," the Hylian replied, "Something happened to me when I pulled up the Master Sword."

He looked up at her and smiled, "Thanks for saving me."

With that, he fell back asleep.

\*\*\*

"Blast!" screamed Agahnim, "Someone has pulled up the Master Sword! The forest is protected. My Triforce won't reach full power, nor will the Dark World be able to form."

"Looks like your plans are falling apart," now it was Link's turn to do the taunting.

Agahnim glared, "There are obvious ways around that. I will destroy the pest who has the gall to mess with the will of Ganon."

It had been nearly an hour since Keria had left the Kokiri Forest, but her thoughts kept going back to Chris. Dorayso had thanked her for his return. She had made sure she had been fed, but then had hurried Keria on her way. She still remembered how Chris had practically begged her to take him along. He had said something about returning the favor. He had been too weak though. That and she wouldn't let anyone so innocent risk his life for her. It just wouldn't be right. He needed to live his child-like life with his people. She needed to save her parents and all of Hyrule as well.

Just then a call came out, interrupting her thoughts, "Look!" called Navi.

Keria looked up to see a swarm of monsters not fifty feet away from her. There were about fifteen Moblins and another twenty Stalfos. They didn't notice her though; they were too absorbed in attacking something else. They had surrounded it and Keria couldn't get a good look. Keria began running to help whoever it was when suddenly one of the Stalfos went flying back. It hit the ground about twenty feet away and collapsed into a pile of bones.

It was then that Keria got a glance at the monsters' target. A large red beast rose up on its hind legs and bit right through the throat of a Moblin. Then, using its steel-like claws, it ripped through another.

Keria didn't slow down. Unsheathing the Master Sword, she mercilessly hacked away at the creatures. Bone and flesh flew as the monsters, which were unprepared for another attacker, fell by her blade. Soon only she and the red feral beast were left standing.

She looked at the creature. It was a cat of some sort. Its fur

bristled like steel blades and its tail had a mace-like object on the end. The cat's claws looked like they could easily cleave her in half, but somehow Keria knew that she wasn't in danger. There was a certain intelligence in his eyes. It spokeâ€|

"Thanks for the hand," it said. This was surprising to her at first, but then she remembered her father's stories about the seventh race of Hyrule. There were super intelligent creatures known as the Catrion. The species had come back from the brink of extinction after being heavily hunted during the Hylian Civil War. "It takes a lot of courage and skill to do what you just did. It is good to see that not everyone has turned to stone."

This raised a question with Keria. She looked up and saw the dark clouds were firmly over her head, "Why didn't you turn to stone?"

The Catrion replied, "I'm guessing that whatever is causing this is magic-based, but fortunately my race is impervious to all forms of magic. I came down from Death Mountain when all the prey turned to stone. I wanted to inquire about its cause at the castle, but the gate to the castle town has been raised. Then those monsters jumped me."

Keria frowned. If the gate was closed, then it would be much harder to get in, "That's bad, because I need to get in to save my parents," she decided to introduce herself, "Anyway, I'm Keria."

"Storm, son of Red Paw," replied the cat, "I have an idea. Why don't we travel together? We could do much more if we combine our strengths."

It seemed sensible enough, "Sure," she replied, "I'll fill you in on the way."

\*\*\*

With her new wider gait, Keria was able to traverse Hyrule Field much faster. Storm had no trouble keeping up. It was late afternoon before they made it to the edge of the castle wall. \_How am I supposed to get over that\_? Keria had to ask herself. She looked to her fairy companion, "Got any ideas Navi?"

"Hmmmâ€|reach in your father's item pouch and pull out the device with the handle and the grappling hook attachment." Keria did so, "Ok, that's the Longshot. It can extend to great lengths and then pull you to whatever it hooks on to."

"What about Storm? Will it be strong enough to pick him up too?"

"It should beâ€|can you hold onto her Storm?"

"I should be able to," Storm replied, then he smiled, "That is if she can stand me being on her back."

Storm climbed up on Keria, and they were catapulted to the top of the wall. The cat climbed off of the princess and jumped to the ground on the other side. Keria swung around the wall and was about to lower herself down when something caught her eye. It was a silhouette. She turned to get a better look it disappeared. Had it been real? There

was a tree right near where she had seen it; maybe it had just been the wind moving the branches. Keria just wasn't sure.

\*\*\*

As dark as it was outside the town wall, it was even darker within. It was truly eerie. The statues that had been in the square before hadn't moved an inch. Not that she had expected them to. Then she heard something stir. Storm heard it too and looked to find its source. He gave a short sniff and then uttered a short decree, "I smell death."

Like it was a sign, Several ReDead slowly began creeping out from every corridor and crevice that could be seen. The creatures were everywhere. There must have been a dozen of them.

Storm was instantly on guard, and Keria drew her sword. Navi sounded a warning, "Don't look into their eyes. A ReDead's gaze can freeze you're soul!"

The two got to work. Zombie after zombie fell, but it seemed that for every undead creature that fell, two more took their place. \_I can't do this\_, thought Keria, \_there are too many\_. Her partner was beginning to tire as well. Using his spiked tail as a club, he lobed off the head of one of the creatures. Keria slashed with her sword and two more fell. There seemed to be no end to the enemy though. The mindless creatures kept coming and coming. There was a pile of bodies at her feet that almost formed a solid wall, and even still, the ReDead were pushing through.

She was near exhaustion. Sweat was getting in her eyes and making it hard to see. And just when she thought she couldn't take another swing, there was a sudden whirring noise and a flaming arrow shot past her striking a zombie right through the head. Its body set fire like dried kindling. It fell against another ReDead, setting it ablaze also. Another fiery arrow was launched then another. Soon all of the creatures were nothing more than smoldering piles of charred dust.

Leaning on her sword, Keria looked up to see whom it was who had saved them. Standing on the wall of the castle town was a short dark silhouette. It called out, "The favor had been returned."

\*\*\*

"So you've been following me?"

"I have."

"Why?"

"Just in case you needed me you know, like what just happened."

Keria couldn't believe that the Kokiri had followed her. But here Chris stood.

"I would have gotten there sooner but that wall was really hard to climb," he continued.

"You shouldn't be putting yourself in danger like this," said Keria.

"No more than you," interrupted Storm, "Instead of scolding the child we should be thanking him. You know that we would not be here if he hadn't intervened."

Keria felt her cheeks flush. Storm was right. "Sorry. Thank you Chris."

"Don't mention it," Chris replied with a smile, "So, can I come with you know?"

Keria hesitated, "Alright. It might be more dangerous to be alone in Hyrule Field—especially with night coming.

Chris jumped up and down with a joy that Keria wished she could be part of. But it seemed as though those days were past. She was an adult now. No longer could she be innocent or naive about the world. It was sad really, but perhaps it was for the best. Keria looked over her shoulder at the sword sheathed to her back. \_After all,\_ she thought, \_a child can't save Hyrule—right\_?

The answers weren't coming to her. She had no choice to move on.

\*\*\*

They reached the castle gates. They were wide open surprisingly enough. Keria had to keep reminding herself that this was it. After they beat whoever was in there—she could go back to her life—or could she? She had to admit that this had changed her forever. \_How did daddy do it?\_ She smiled at the thought. Then she thought, \_he had the Triforce of Courage. What have I got? A couple of friends and a mean looking sword.\_ Would it be enough?

As they stood there, Saira appeared before them. "You have done well," she said. Keria had a feeling that there was a 'but' coming. It did, "Your final task will be to defeat the Master of Illusion: Agahnim. But he will be your greatest challenge yet. Don't be fooled. He will try to use your own mind against you. Your strengths will be as weaknesses to him."

"How could we possibly defeat him then?" asked Keria.

"You must do to him as he does to you," Saira replied, "You see, Agahnim's weakness is his own power. You must find a way to turn it against him."

\*\*\*

With that said, Keria, Storm, and Chris entered the castle. Saira watched them go. She said a silent prayer for them, and hoped that Keria would discover her greatest strength before it was too late.

\*\*\*

"Strangely quiet," remarked Keria.

"I would have thought that monsters would be swarming around us by now," agreed Storm.

"Yeah," was all Chris said. Navi was the only one who remained quiet. She was on alert to make sure that the others got enough warning just in case a monster did show up.

They made their way to the royal thrown room, but saw nothing. It was empty. But then she felt something, "Don't move," she whispered. The others did as she said. Then there was a clanging sound above them. Before they could do anything, a cage dropped on Storm and Chris. "I'll have you out in a sec," called Keria as she unsheathed the Master Sword.

"Not so fast!" called a voice. Strangely enough, noted Keria, it was her own. But the voice had not come from her lips. She turned around to see a shadow of herself.

Navi turned bright yellow and called, "Uh oh! Dark Keriaâ€|can you conquer yourself?"

"We'll see!" Keria came out sword swinging, but the shadow always seemed to be one step ahead of her. It parried every swing. Next, she tried to zap it with her sword, but it blocked every zap with its shield.

The shadow went on the offensive. Its sword came down hard on her shield, driving Keria to her knees. She tried to slice out the shadow's legs, but it just jumped out of the way.

The shadow laughed, "You can't beat me because I'm you!"

"But you're not me!" said Keria with fresh energy, "You can't beat me because you're not all of me!"

"Try me!"

Keria did. Reaching into her pouch, she grabbed the Din's Fire crystal. Feeling it's power coursing through her, she pushed it to the ground. A wall of flame surrounded her and pushed out until it reached its target. Dark Keria was stunned. Keria pulled out the Fairy Bow and launched a Light Arrow into the creature's heart.

\*\*\*

Even as the shadow faded, she felt another presence enter the room, "Princess Keria. My how you've grown."

Keria spun around to see a tall gray-haired man with a flowing red cape. "Agahnim I presume."

He nodded, "Give me the Master Sword and surrender to me."

"As if!" called Keria.

"I thought you might need some convincing so I've arranged for you to meet you're parents." He snapped his fingers and Link and Zelda appeared. They were gagged and chained to the wall. An Iron Knuckle appeared beside them. It held its huge axe up to Zelda's throat. "Do



as I say!" threatened Agahnim, "There is no other option."

Keria suddenly had an idea, "That's funny, I see one."

"And just what is that my dear?" Before Agahnim could even get that out, Keria reached into her pouch and grabbed a crystal with a blue orb in its center. It was Nayru's Love. Keria activated it and threw it to her parents' feet. Half an instant later, a blue crystalline shield formed around them. The Iron Knuckle tried to break the force field, but couldn't.

"What do you thing of that?" said Keria smugly.

Agahnim smiled, "I think that that is one less thing that you have to protect you. Get her Iron Knuckle!"

The armored knight turned and came at Keria swinging. She jumped out of the way as its axe came around and it smashed the cage that held her friends.

"You two take on Iron Knuckle," called Keria, her eyes narrowed as she focused on her target, "Agahnim is mine!"

The Iron Knuckle was forced back as Storm and Chris attacked it. Soon, Keria and Agahnim might as well have been alone.

"You really think you can take me on?" questioned Agahnim, "You are a mere child. You may have your parents' love of adventure, but you don't have their power." He held up his hand and a black triangle formed on the back of his hand, "Plus, I have the Triforce of Darkness." He shot out a beam of darkness at her. It hit her and wrapped around her like a hand. She felt it trying to squeeze the very air from her lungs. Keria struggled against the dark wizard's magic, but couldn't free herself.

But even as she felt her vision blur, a new power surge through her veins. No! It wasn't a new power. It had been there all along. Ever since she had pulled up the Master Sword, it had been guiding her. It had been pushing her and telling her that she could do it. But now it had come into the light of her mind. Against the strength of her oppressor, Keria took in a deep breath and screamed, "You're wrong!" Her voice echoed throughout the chamber and shook Agahnim's hold on her.

As his dark power recoiled from the light of her strength, Agahnim called, "How did you do that?"

Keria regained her bearings, "You were wrong. As the child of my parents, they are within me. Their strength, their wisdom and courage are my power. And it makes me the perfect vessel for both."

"What are you babbling about child!" demanded Agahnim.

Keria said no more, only held up her left hand. To everyone but her surprise, the symbol of the Triforce appeared on the back of her hand. A second later, two of the segments lit up, the green and blue ones.

The wizard stepped back in shock, but quickly composed himself. Keria simply looked at the wizard with cool eyes. She no longer felt the

need to fear him. Agahnim spoke once more, "So the brat has gained the right to hold the Triforces of Wisdom and Courage. No matter. I still have my dark Triforceâ€|and a few tricks up my sleeveâ€|Let us see if you can overcome this ancient magic. En guard!"

Agahnim struck out a lightning bolt, which knocked Keria off her feet. She shook her head and when she looked up, Keria saw three of Agahnim. She knew that her eyes weren't playing tricks on herâ€|two of them had to be illusions. They spoke in unison, "Well Keria, here I am. Find me if you canâ€|I'll even give you a free shot a one of us!"

Keria knew that it was a trick. She couldn't defeat him with her own power, "Save it!" she called, "It wouldn't help anyway," she paused trying to give the right effect, "I have no intention of attacking you!" That was partially true she thought.

"Giving up so soon?" questioned Agahnim skeptically.

"Call it whatever you like," said Keria. She tried to sound as defiantly defeated as possible.

All three Agahnims held their hands in front of them, palms facing each other, and an arch of energy began to dance between their fingers. The energy built up into a ball of light. The wizards released the balls of energy and shot them at Keria.

Keria let fly the Master Sword like a bat and returned the energy balls back to their sources. The two Phantom Agahnims that were to Agahnim's sides vanished. Agahnim was hit and went flying back. He quickly stood although he was clearly in pain.

"Very good princessâ€|but I am not yet ready to admit defeat. My Triforce protects me." Agahnim hit Keria with another lightning bolt, which stunned her. When she looked up, the two phantoms were back. They readied to attack her again in unison.

All in the time between heartbeats, Keria readied her stance; she felt a tiny drop of perspiration fall from her brow. Keria's muscles tensed as the wizard and his clones let fly their deadly attacks. This time, Keria took more time to calculate just how to hit the magic attackâ€|she swung and they hit her swordâ€|all of the magic went to the Agahnim she knew was real.

Keria didn't miss her mark. Agahnim was ripped apart by his own magic. What was left of him stood there for a moment. One lone, sightless eye glared. A handless arm pointed a nonexistent finger at her. "Agahnimâ€|the dark wizardâ€|defeated by thisâ€|child?" Agahnim roared in pain as the last of his energy left him. His body vaporized, and in its place was the Triforce of Darkness. It just sat there, suspended in mid air, perhaps waiting to claim its next master. But that would have to waitâ€|

Just then Storm and Chris ran up. Chris called out, "Sorry we couldn't get here sooner, but it seems that you didn't need any help after all."

Keria nodded and then walked over to her parents. With the Master Sword in hand, she shattered their shackles. They looked her wordlessly; not believing their eyesâ€|their little girl had grown up

after all. So much had happened in such a short amount of time. Keria wasn't sure if she believed it all herself.

"Keriaâ€¦" asked Zelda.

"Is that really you?" finished Link.

Keria hugged her parents tightly and they all cried in each other's arms, "Yeah it's me," she said weakly.

"It's all over now," assured Zelda.

"No. There is one more thing I have to do. The life that Agahnim stole must be restoredâ€¦stone turned to flesh once moreâ€¦"

Walking over to the still waiting Triforce, Keria drew the Master Sword and said, "Triforce, there were only meant to be three. As your new master, I return you to the peopleâ€¦from whence you cameâ€¦" With that, Keria slashed down with her sword, splitting the Triforce of Darkness in two. Energy poured from it until all that was left was an empty shell. Then, it too vanished.

Keria said nothing more. She only went to the window and watched the clouds part. The storm was over, and a new day broke.

**\*\*Postlude\*\***

Well, there was still one thing left to do. Keria stood there in the forest, "Well, I'm ready," she said. It was time to lay the Master Sword to rest once more and pray that it never need be used again. She walked up to the pedestal. After giving one last glance back at her parents and all of her friends, she raised the Master Sword up high and then slammed it back into place.

Again the energy and light surrounded her and Keria could feel the ground coming closer. When the light was gone, Keria looked herself over. She was herself again, at least on the outside. Whoever she turned out to be on the inside was up to her she guessed. At least she had had a glimpse of what she could become if she put her mind to it. She smiled, feeling free as a child again.

Chris ran up to her and gave her a big hug. Keria knew the carefree days would pass though, but while they were here, why not make the most of them. She hugged Chris back and then gave him a small kiss on the cheek. They both blushed as children often do.

The End

Finished on 2-5-00

End  
file.